

Members

Sen. Edward Charbonneau, Chairperson
Sen. Randall Head
Sen. Sue Errington
Sen. Connie Sipes
Rep. Vanessa Summers
Rep. Dennis Tyler
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. Phil Hinkle
John Taylor
Dave Beck
Hugh Beebe
Dr. Gladys Beale
Michael Carmin
Dr. Robin Murphy



INDIANA COMMISSION ON AUTISM

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 21, 2009
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. Edward Charbonneau, Chairperson; Sen. Randall Head;
Sen. Sue Errington; Sen. Connie Sipes; Rep. Vanessa
Summers; Rep. Dennis Tyler; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Rep. Phil
Hinkle; John Taylor; Hugh Beebe; Michael Carmin.

Members Absent: Dave Becker; Dr. Gladys Beale; Dr. Robin Murphy.

Sen. Charbonneau called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and asked the members to introduce themselves. He gave a brief overview of the agenda, explaining that he had requested additional information from the individuals on the agenda based on the questions and concerns raised during the previous Commission meeting.

Sen. Charbonneau noted that the next Commission meeting will be held at the Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center (located in the Riley Outpatient Center, 702 Barnhill Drive, Suite 4300, Indianapolis, IN 46202) on October 13, 2009, with the public hearing beginning at 1:00 p.m.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Update from Family and Social Services (FSSA)

Peter Bisbecos, Director, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), provided a handout² and discussed questions raised by the members during the previous Commission meeting concerning: (1) the Medicaid waiver waiting lists; and (2) utilization of crisis management services in the various developmental disability service districts located in Indiana. He stated that DDRS is analyzing the differences in utilization among the districts to determine possible reasons for the differences.

In response to questions from Sen. Charbonneau, Mr. Bisbecos stated that: (1) the boundaries of the developmental disability service districts were delineated by DDRS; (2) if money were not an issue in reducing the Medicaid waiver waiting lists, it would likely take four to six years to eliminate the waiting lists because the necessary staffing capacity to process applications and provide treatment is not currently available; and (3) adding 2000 new Medicaid waiver recipients per year would be a quick pace.

Presentation concerning the Indiana Comprehensive State Plan to Guide Services for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Plan)

Dana Renay, Executive Director, Autism Society of Indiana (Society), provided a handout³ and a detailed presentation concerning the Plan. Ms. Renay explained that the first Plan was completed in 1987; in 2005 the Commission directed DDRS to update the Plan; and the updating process is being facilitated by the Society. She stated that the purpose of the Plan is to guide the manner in which individuals with autism and their families are supported in Indiana.

There was general discussion among the members, Ms. Renay, and Mr. Bisbecos concerning: (1) the effectiveness of the Plan in assisting with interagency cooperation to provide lifetime assistance to individuals with autism and their families; (2) the improvements that have been made in efficiency and cooperation among agencies to provide the assistance since the original Plan was completed; and (3) observations by members that cooperation currently exists among those providing the assistance.

In response to a question from Rep. Hinkle, Kim Dodson, ARC of Indiana, noted the positive effect of recent legislation requiring delivery of applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy to be provided only by individuals who are certified specifically in ABA.

Ms. Renay described the Indiana Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (Council) and its work. In response to questions from Sen. Charbonneau, Sen. Sipes, and Sen. Errington, Ms. Renay explained that: (1) the Council is in the process of recruiting members for the open Council positions that are to be filled by individuals representing state agencies; (2) the Council's monthly meetings have resulted in Plan goals, are now focused on the work of subgroups to update and refine the goals, and provide a forum for participants to efficiently work together to resolve identified problems; and (3) deficiencies result from the open state agency Council positions, but the Council has direct contact with individuals at those state agencies to attempt to resolve the identified problems in spite of the deficiencies.

²Attachment 1.

³Attachment 2.

Ms. Renay discussed evidence based practices for treatment of individuals with autism, emphasizing the lack of research on methods other than ABA. She noted that appropriate treatment methods are specific to each individual.

There was general discussion among the members concerning involvement of the Legislature in the Council's work, including frequency of updates of the members from the Council, funding related to the Plan, health provider training concerning autism, insurance mandate concerns and implications, and incorporation in the Plan of national guidelines concerning health and education. Ms. Renay stated that she will present legislative requests to the Commission at its next meeting.

Emily Shelman, Legislative Liaison, Department of Education, stated that she will check on implementation of the Department's portion of the Plan, referred to by Rep. Hinkle on page 2 of the Plan. In response to a question from Sen. Charbonneau, Ms. Shelman stated that she will convey a suggestion that Dr. Dawn McGrath of the Department fill the open position representing the Department on the Council.

In response to questions from Rep. Hinkle and Rep. Summers, Naomi Swiezy, Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center, noted that: (1) health guidelines are issued by a national board and could potentially be supplemented; (2) Indiana University medical students rotate through the Center during their 3rd or 4th year of medical school; and (3) there is currently a one-year medical residency at the Center.

In response to questions from Sen. Charbonneau and Sen. Sipes, Ms. Renay and Mr. Bisbecos stated that: (1) it is not clear who is responsible for implementation of the Plan, which is problematic; (2) the Society facilitates the Council's meetings with funding from DDRS; (3) because DDRS is responsible for only part of the spectrum of services available to individuals with autism, and the Society covers the entire spectrum in its work, DDRS has considered the Society to be a better facilitator for the Council's work; and (4) DDRS is now beginning to realize the extent of the work needed by all interested parties to implement the Plan and, as a result of this realization, it is anticipated that much progress will be made in the next 12 months.

In response to conversation among Rep. Duncan, Rep. Hinkle, Sen. Errington, and Sen. Sipes, Anita Strauss, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Insurance, discussed requiring the State Police Department's self insured health plan to provide coverage for treatment of autism. Following the discussion, Ms. Strauss agreed to provide to the Commission data related to costs of requiring this coverage. In response to a question from Rep. Hinkle, Mr. Bisbecos agreed to facilitate obtaining data related to costs of direct state funding of autism treatment for all state employees. Rep. Tyler emphasized his belief that coverage should be available for all individuals who need treatment for autism, regardless of anyone's reluctance to do so due to the costs. He stated that the information requested from Ms. Strauss and Mr. Bisbecos is very important to determining a course of action.

Sen. Charbonneau reminded the members of the Commission's next public meeting on October 13, 2009, at 1:00 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, Sen. Charbonneau adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.